



No Will? No Problem!

If you are among the majority of Americans who do not have a will valid in the state in which you currently reside, no problem! The State of California will know what to do—but you may not like it.

The good news: Even without a will, you already have an estate plan. The State of California has you covered. The Probate Court will distribute your belongings, pets, minor children and property as it deems best.

The bad news: Distribution of your estate and/or guardianship of your minor children may not reflect your wishes or values. Distribution to your closest blood relatives may not reflect the relationships that are most important to you, and it will certainly not include your church or any other charity that is close to your heart.

Sometimes folks resist writing a will because they think that if they write a will, they will die. And in so thinking, they are correct. The only alternatives are to die with a will or without one.

Other folks don't trust lawyers or like to pay them. Some feel this way about surgeons. But professional judgment and skill is sometimes worth paying for.

To find an estate planning attorney recommended by the experience of fellow Episcopalians, contact your Gift Planning Officer. Did you know that you can make a confidential appointment with an attorney who will prepare a simple will for as little as \$75? To find out how, click on "Making a Will" at www.EpiscopalGift.org or give me a call with your questions.

For those utterly opposed to obtaining professional counsel in this matter, there is a statutory fill-in-the-blanks will form. If you are willing to risk this, I'll send you one.

Not for nothing does *The Book of Common Prayer* speak of "**the duty** of all persons to make wills, while in health, arranging for the disposal of their temporal goods, not neglecting if they are able to leave bequests for religious and charitable uses." (p. 445)

You have the power to TELL the State of California how you wish your leftovers to be distributed. You have the opportunity for your estate plan to reflect your own faith and values.

Just do it, while you still have the chance. Happy Easter!

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